

# Using nudges to change behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, creative nudges have prompted people to adopt simple behaviors in the name of public health. These behaviors include fist bumps in place of shaking hands and standing six

feet apart, according to a study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Population Health Management*.

Ivo Vlaev, DPhil, from the University of Warwick, and members of the Behavioral Insights Team from the U.K.'s Cabinet Office, developed the MINDSPACE framework, which has been widely used to guide effective policy utilizing the latest insights from behavioral sciences and nudge theory. In this issue of *Population Health Management*, Dr. Vlaev and coauthors highlight examples of nudges that were utilized in the early months of the COVID-19 [pandemic](#) and summarize their effectiveness.

"Organizational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners can use [nudges](#) to promote [public health](#) when mandates are not politically feasible or enforceable," state the investigators.

"Nudges work. We just never had to use this powerful social science tool amidst a pandemic. We are proud to publish one of the first reports of a successful deployment," says David Nash, MD, MBA, Editor-in-Chief of *Population Health Management* and Founding Dean Emeritus and Dr. Raymond C. and Doris N. Grandon Professor, Jefferson College of Population Health, Philadelphia, PA.

**More information:** Hadley Stevens Smith et al, A Review of the MINDSPACE Framework for Nudging Health Promotion During Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Population Health Management* (2022). [DOI: 10.1089/pop.2021.0269](https://doi.org/10.1089/pop.2021.0269)

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